



The Demographic Dividend Knowledge Sharing Symposium For the East and Southern Africa Region

Report Summary

Introduction

In line with the recommendation of the “Addis Ababa Declaration on Population And Development in Africa Beyond 2014”, the Common Africa Position on the Post 2015 Agenda and other resolutions made at various African Union meetings over the past few years, a number of countries in the East and Southern Africa region have undertaken studies to assess their potential to harness the Demographic Dividend (DD). Given the growing interest in the region in taking the DD agenda forward the regional knowledge-sharing symposium was convened to provide a platform where countries would share experiences, progress made and lessons learned, and forge common solutions to address emerging challenges. This platform would allow countries to discuss regional and national strategies to support the implementation of policies and the engagement of all stakeholders to realize the DD in the Region.

Kenya’s Ministry of Devolution and Planning through the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), in partnership with UNFPA Kenya Country Office (KCO) and the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) hosted the East and Southern Africa Regional Demographic Dividend Knowledge Sharing Symposium between 24th and 26th August 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Symposium Objectives

The Symposium was convened to provide a knowledge sharing platform to enable sharing of DD study results, experiences, and approaches for galvanizing policy and programme actions for harnessing the DD in the region and enhance synergies for its realization. The specific objectives of the symposium were to:

- i. Present existing demographic dividend studies, approaches, findings and outputs of demographic dividend initiatives in the region
- ii. Share lessons learned, challenges and emerging opportunities
- iii. Discuss mechanisms to enrich demographic dividend activities in the region, including guidelines for developing national demographic dividend roadmaps
- iv. Agree on structure and operation of the Regional demographic dividend Knowledge Sharing Platform.

Participating Countries and Institutions

The symposium brought together government representatives (mostly from ministries of Finance and Development Planning), UNFPA officials, and research institutions from the following 15 African countries: Botswana, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Participants also included representatives of the East African Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the private sector, and other development partners.

Highlights of the Presentations and Deliberations

The symposium was organized in four main components: the opening ceremony, country presentations (by 12 countries), case studies of DD interventions (drawn from Kenya, Uganda, and the Sahel region), group discussions and reports, and the closing ceremony. Mr Hassan Noor Hassan representing the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Devolution and Planning officially opened the symposium noting that that the DD provided a valuable paradigm for ensuring prioritization of the wellbeing of youth in the region and the realization of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Key lessons and issues that came out of the presentations and the discussions are:

- i. Few of the countries had started the process of integrating the studies in development planning processing and formulating roadmaps on how to take the agenda forward, and some were thinking about starting studies.
- ii. There is high traction among policy makers about DD in all the countries where entry level specialized studies have been done. The positive economic argument associated with the change in age structure and the integrated development approach is appealing to development actors and decision makers.
- iii. The success of DD programmes has been stronger in countries where the government has provided strong leadership of the process, coupled by in-depth involvement of representatives of other sectors.
- iv. All studies have shown huge potential economic gains that countries can earn if they make integrated investments in all the pillars of the DD. However, the studies have come up with general policy prescriptions, and there is urgent need to identify specific game-changer interventions within the DD such as Empowerment, Education and Employment.
- v. There is a need for sub-national level analysis to guide action at this governance level where programmes actually get implemented
- vi. Governments are eager for structured guidance on how to move from initial studies to integrated planning and implementation of programme actions that will help to

actualize harnessing a sizeable DD. Mainstreaming DD principles in development plans is critical for governments allocate financial resources for DD interventions.

- vii. DD programmes that facilitate access to funding mechanisms for DD interventions, such as the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographics Project, would accelerate implementation of DD programmes.
- viii. Since demographic dividend interventions will be implemented at local levels, it is critical to generate sub-national level analysis to guide action at this governance level

Four Key Areas for taking DD Agenda Forward

- i. **DD capacity building that address the following gaps:** conceptualization and framing of the DD concept and pillars in the context of the looming SDG framework; modelling, including assessment of available models, especially for low fertility countries; DD indicators and performance monitoring; integrated planning (how should it be done in practical terms and what tools should be used?); translation and effective communication of DD evidence; sub-national DD analysis. Enhancement of regional and national capacity building training workshops and integrating DD courses in university curriculum.
- ii. **Sustainability:** To achieve sustainability, it is critical to strengthen advocacy efforts for strong ownership and leadership by the government and in-depth involvement of the private sector, youth, civil society and other stakeholders; ensure that DD programmes and interventions are well funded
- iii. **Assessing progress - performance monitoring and accountability:** Need for every country to come up with a DD roadmap that defines key goals, game changer interventions to be implemented, roles of various stakeholders, advocacy strategy, and key indicators for monitoring progress.
- iv. **Knowledge Sharing Platform:** Establish a Regional Knowledge Sharing Platform to share policy-relevant DD evidence and facilitate capacity building.

Symposium Recommendations

The symposium came up with the following ten recommendations for action at regional and national levels:

1. National DD programmes should be embraced at the highest level of leadership and managed by the government institution responsible for coordinating development programmes to ensure ownership and accountability at all levels of government and among stakeholders and citizens

2. Governments should create an enabling environment to foster growth of and participation of the private sector and other stakeholders, including youth, in furthering the DD agenda
3. There should be a comprehensive review of current DD wheels and the associated modelling, costing and planning tools in line with different national socioeconomic and demographic contexts across Africa
4. Develop regional and national roadmaps for implementing DD activities with robust frameworks and indicators for monitoring progress and enforcing accountability
5. There should be comprehensive mapping and documentation of specific high impact game-changer interventions and innovations for each DD pillar based on proven positive experiences from East Asia, Latin America and African countries.
6. The DD agenda should be integrated in development plans at regional, national, and sub-national levels and anchored in the Agenda 2063 and SDG frameworks to ensure sustained prioritization, resource allocation and implementation of DD interventions.
7. Strengthen regional coordination mechanisms and linkages among DD initiatives at the African Union, regional, national and subnational levels to ensure consistent responses
8. Operationalize an Africa-wide DD knowledge sharing forum to facilitate exchange of experiences, best practices, policy-oriented evidence, and capacity development among all stakeholders working on the topic, including policy makers, development partners, funders, researchers, the private sector, and youth groups
9. Develop clear communication and advocacy strategies to ensure common and consistent understanding of the DD concept and what needs to be done for countries to harness it
10. Enhance technical capacity of research and academic institutions, policy makers, and other stakeholders in generating, translating and using DD evidence in priority setting, integrated planning and programme implementation.